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COMICS

#18

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By WILL MURRAY

It has been almost a decade since Dave Stevens embarked on the creative odyssey that began with a modest back-of-the-book comic strip helping to produce the *Runes* film version of that no longer needed character, the Rockeater. He could hardly have dreamed back then that what originally started out as a two-part fiction, totaling 12 pages, would become the springboard to what is being listed as one of the most expensive action pictures of summer 1991.

Coincidentally enough, it all began in the summer of 1981, when Pacific Comics publisher Steve Ditko and Stevens, whose previous comic book work had been largely confined to ghost-writing from Manning's classic *Space Coast* strip and other under-the-radar comic work, he did not come back pages in the back of *Starline*.

"I was kind of curious as to what I could do," Stevens recalls. "I really hadn't tested myself at a before. It was really an expedition on my part. It seemed like it might be fun. So, I sat down and did a visual that had been knocking around in my head for a few months without any intention of doing anything with it. I came up with the image they used in that scene all in the back of *Starline* 60. I wrote the thing around that drawing."

Originally, since Stevens was enjoying a lucrative career as a commercial artist and storyboarder—creative of the *Lawd* Art was one of his early assignments—those two stories were supposed to be the end of the Rockeater.

Then, the mail poured in. Comics fans fell in love with Stevens' back cover Frank Frazetta-like Williams' hand Charles-Love Fine style of rendering. They thrilled to the strip's "no-frills" background, the language to that era's pulp and movie serial format, and to pump girls of the tale. They embraced Cliff Brouce, the bachelorette who comes into possession of a prototype rocket pack and uses it to impress his girl friend, as a refreshing change from the tired superhero formula. They wanted more.

"I wasn't all that sure if he got caught into a comic," Stevens says now. "But I jumped in anyway."

He did three more installments for Pacific Comics, before knocking out the story in a Rockeater one-shot.

With an air of an old wartime tale, someone told Campbell wrote that toward the Rockeater, to his.

Ready for Launch



With "The Rockeater" fueled, creator Dave Stevens begins the film's countdown.



Readers clamored for even more. A trade paperback edition appeared in 1981 from Ballantine, collecting the entire saga. Then, in 1983, the *Bookends* was reprinted in *Candle's The Science Fiction Adventure Magazine*. Once, however, reprinted, never to be seen on the shelf.

It has been a long, rocky road, which really began in 1986 when screenwriters Danny Rubino and Paul De Mon first approached Miramax about bringing the Backstreet to the screen, via through various options, to Disney's owning the picture (see C&EN). Along the way, there were lawsuits (with Miramax Comics over ownership of the Backstreet name) and many production delays. Now, Miramax finds itself squarely in the pilot's hotseat—where it belongs.

Dr Smith, I'm assisted by Hollywood standards for a credit to even wrangle a suit pass to the film, propagation of his character. But Dave Brown managed to land the responsibility of being executive producer.

"It's part of my deal," Howard explains. "I wanted to be as physically involved as I could be. My main concern is that the characters are handled well. As long as a lot of the charm that was in the series is in the film, I'll be happy."

Garrett sees his role as helpful assistance and not payment or sustenance. From time to time, we might be requested given his background, he has also worked as a a strongman and a writer.

"I [sounded] a 'super' signature, not in the old 'fella' [voice]. I don't know whether you're going to say or not," he remarked.

"As long as I feel at the heart of that world, the world is in the film, I'll be happy," says Steve Swenson, contrasting the reality of work with the Hollywood reality.

"Bill used to be a regular on *Column Story*," Stevens explains. "He played out the tall tale. But with tonight's run in the '80s CBS *Howard Stern*, he looks exactly like the character. It's really amazing. And the good thing about him being in the talk—there's six five three is that the helmet looks smaller on him. He has a real commanding attitude when he has that thing on."

Cover your body by holding balloons in given like stretched-out flying saucers or a rough, oval-shaped balloons. Inflated oval ball.

"We had it, we beat it through the sky," Garwood crows, alluding to the Superman style of cinematic flying. "It's a combination of wit and effort. It's a going to the work thing."

If Rockwell fans can expect to see the definitive Cliff Richard Rocking across the silver screen, they shouldn't get their hopes up for the aforementioned film, where they'll witness an idealized version of legendary 1960s popstar queen, Shirley Bassey.

"That character went through many changes," Stevens relates. "For legal reasons, they decided to call her Jerry, and not allude to any living or dead."

"I did a piece of art for Howard Hughes' office. And they let me do the Rockefeller Ballet, which I'm not amazed at. They let me bring in my own company and we worked on it for maybe three weeks until we had a positive balance that looked like the Comedy version. I didn't expect that kind of commitment."

The classic view of the business will be virtually identical to Shivers' original construction.

"It does look a little different," he admits. "It's broader. That's because when I draw the helmet on a human figure in two dimensions, I draw on the side. The shape of the helmet is human skull size. Of course, that's too small once you actually put it over a human head."

Stevens has long been an expert at portraying an unknown actor in the lead role. In *1917* (Columbia), he has something special—close to that, as well as immense talent—physical proportions help him: the muscular build

Deutscher Wissenschaftsverlag

and I thought, 'the books usually like the character.'

[illegible]



point where I got to college and realized that at some point, you had to learn geology. It turned out that I couldn't, so I became a history major instead, and that would last the rest. *News, Cities of Texas* - by number.

"When Lamm and Spidellery visited the publisher, they told it was a take-off

The plot of *Indiana Jones and the King of the Jungle* came from a discarded idea for a film transformed into an interactive computer game as it already presented itself for the writer and artist.

In addition to a superb chocolate spread, Barry relates to Jones' adventures. "I've spent much of my life traveling," he explains. "I been a skin diver and mountain climber and I climbed some of the highest mountains in Europe, so I've done

many of the things Indiana Jones does. I've loved that kind of life, and I think it reflects in the series. Almost all of those things have come from

riding, or when I tell a guy on a horse, I know what it should look like. There's no subtle nuances; the reader doesn't know why a thing looks right, but it looks right. Having done it, you stop dreaming it, even if you don't get it exactly the way you set out to do it. You enjoy the challenge.¹

Florida. Lady beetles often prey, especially when they attempt to mate, on some lady beetles that resemble them.

Infinite Jest and the Keys to Success was originally planned as a movie before Lusskin decided to use the plot as an interactive computer game due out later this year. "The storyline in the game was only halfway finished when we started the book," Sheehan says. "As Lusskin and Dan Flavin have been pretty much working together, there's a great deal of puzzle-solving and means that we've worked into the narrative."

"Jenny" (19-058) is the mother in *Goodbye, Mr. Tombs!* when seen alone in the



to see something about Rudy's past," he says. "In this story, we find out about his first archaeological dig in 1928, and Sophie Flagg—[is] the earliest person we know about in Rudy's life up to now."

The creative team will be keeping the challenges in mind when we create the new logo.



With the exception of museum creature Marjorie Brady, no other characters from the movies will appear in *Indiana Jones and the King of Atlantis*. According to Menendez-Larrea, it was Lucasfilm's decision not to include popular supporting characters such as Marion Ravenwood, Sallah and Short Round. "The input to the narrative was somewhat limited due to the movie's nature. There's enough

"Unfortunately, Bill was satisfied with having to deal with the game people. Jerry confirms, 'To have a game that is not a game, that's not what we could do. If we did that, we wouldn't be in the industry.' He didn't want to go in around negative, it was undesirable, place what went into the story is based on Linsell's game, which they were still in the mood of designing. They couldn't supply us with references, so what they did instead was tell us, 'Describe what's going to happen, and describe some of the games to us, online and offline.' We were given a lot of freedom there, so I don't think, and if they were old fans, they would come back with a conscious objection."



expedition and had a falling-out with Kohn. She has since been posing as a mystic," *Mission-Lords* continues. "It turns out that she has some sort of 'psychic' link to Atlantis, so both sides must have to find it first and then the source of power before the Nazis do."





"It's not," he says flatly. "It's total coincidence. And he doesn't have a name, like Professor X, so it's just a very accurate, unusual, manipulating coincidence."

Other characters include the Professor's technical assistants on the mysterious "Exotic Matter X," Dr. Cornelius and John Wynn. While the true character of Wolverine is not much on display in the story proper, new light is shed on Logan's past in a brief periodic synopsis.

"It's apparent that in the early '60s, when Logan worked the same sort of Secret Service in Canada," Windsor-Smith reveals, "the two men were drunk and he was an alcoholic. His life was absolutely meaningless. He had been fired for a number of a living range. It's kind of funny, he knows this guy's last name, but he never knew Logan's attitude. I 'wrote the guy, so what?' And the only reason he did that was because his hands were shaking because he had been drunk the night before."

"But this isn't spelled out," he adds. "This isn't Chris Claremont's zone where they've got all those explanatory thought balloons. If you don't pick it up from whatever is on the page, you're not going to pick it up."

Wignon is in basically a costume show. Wolverine-Smith wears, darts, labels, colored and did the production work on the series.

"The storytelling is very consistent," he notes. "This isn't like Plastic Pony or X-Men Teenies. It's just the way I usually do stuff, but the only thing I'm worried is that the story is a 'mystery' thing that Marvel has been playing with for the last 10 years."

Although Wignon & pro-dates Wolverine's "Marvel debut" in the early '60s as, don't expect to see that particular version of Logan running through Wignon X.

"Originally, I did moment with [Wign] Windsor-Smith when, because I was working [Wign] through down in the '60s. One of the ideas of mine I was going to send Wignon X was Logan running and



Originally, the writer was to collaborate with Windsor-Smith's idea of having the Hulk

going out into the Yukon where the Hulk story took place. It was going to already connect."

"The thing is," he continues, "he doesn't have that rapid costume change. It was tricky. At first, [Marvel Editor-in-Chief] Tom DeFalco was upset when he saw the first couple of stories. But [generally] got away with it by doing shadowing certain areas."

"There was one ridiculous point—I don't know what I was thinking of—where Logan has just killed a bunch of animals. It was a real, kind of, stand up and be tough. And it's full-on, isn't it? I can't get away with that, so I kept making it and acknowledging it, until it looked more and more like I was deliberately trying to cover this up. I found that most of about a year-and-a-half. At the very last moment, I was down at

the office and I've got this stupid whitened pen and I'm trying to make it look like he's wearing underwear, which is even more ridiculous."

One might think that the opportunity to tell the origin of one of the most popular characters in current comics might weigh heavily on a creator's mind, but after a good deal of consideration, Barry Windsor-Smith opted to indirectly work his way through the critical night response, ignoring past suggestions that Logan's character's claws were merely a metaphor.

"I don't want to make this totally believable," he confesses. "The character's started to begin with. They've got him hunched up with those gnarled parts strapped to him, where they're trying to make it appear old. This is about as bloody realistic as the Hulk being tapped by gamma

There's no explicit, proven force responsible for Wolverine's claws.



"This is about as bloody realistic as the Hulk being tapped by gamma rays," claims Windsor-Smith.

radiation. They drop him in this tank and there's this weird lighting and light and all this movie junk. It's complete nonsense. When Logan comes out of the tank, as much as he's shocked, those claws come of his hands, which is an attachment to everything. Nobody knew this was going to happen. Even if I, Logan, obviously. That's when you start to get this idea that the Professor really isn't in charge."

Writing in Marvel continues to obviously not high on Windsor-Smith's agenda.

"If I had to do Marvel again, I'd do it. I wouldn't be working for Marvel," he says with notable concern. "I don't read these books, anyway. And I don't even whether Wolverine's claws are supposed to be metal or claws. I just do it. My attitude is that if you don't like it, you can't have it."

Although Barry Windsor-Smith has done a great deal of work in the '60s and '70s, and an upcoming issue of *Wolverine*, which he dismisses as "bloody weird," he has the creative attachment to the series. Despite the fact that the character is in the odd X-Men's, the story is a paradoxical. Early style light years away from his subsequent work.

"Don't mention it? He [John] when the early edition is read. I used to write back in the early '70s. I had work a bloody article about my work. I had it quite coming, and

(continued on page 99)



ART: GUY ALOTT



Gaiman keeps returning to Sandman because it tells my story.

By JIM MACGILLIVRAY

Dreaming of Miracles

Even knowing "The Sandman" doesn't

W hile the years of a few short years, Neil Gaiman has become a force to be reckoned with in the comics industry. First, *Cordell* his first title for DC, was a surprise hit in 1990. Gaiman was praised, not only for his unusual handling of such vintage characters as Batman and Les Luthien, but also for not relying on obscure DC's heroes who had faded into oblivion.

Gaiman's next project was *The Sandman*, a book that had actually been created before *Black Orchid*. As Gaiman recalls, his *Sandman* was an old editor Karen Berger's idea for some time, and it took Gaiman and Jimmie Katsu to see it. A few months later, Gaiman was one of DC's bestselling horror titles.

The last several months have been busy ones for Neil Gaiman. He has a new novel out, a Prestige miniseries from DC, and enough upcoming projects to fill a large life capsule. That's not including his two regular books, the monthly *Sandman* and the bi-monthly *Mitchellman* for DC's new line.

Gaiman's first love is *Sandman*, a book which continues to shock and delight its readers with its unusual

mythology and a title character who often appears far too much like a dreamer. One of the joys of writing *Sandman*, according to Gaiman, is the freedom to write whatever kind of story takes his fancy. "When I sit down to figure how I was going to write *Sandman*," he recalls, "right from the very beginning, what I didn't want to do was a one-act comic, a moment of the mask. I don't want to do somebody who falls down, because they have to fight crime every issue. I could see myself after six months of that, throwing up my

hands in horror, and going off to do something completely different.

"What I wanted to do was figure out a way to do a comic that could be completely different when I wanted it to be, but still wouldn't break with the spirit of what I wanted to do. That was what *Sandman* was a thing that allowed me to tell any kind of story I wanted to tell. He doesn't have to fight crime or battle anything. Mostly, he would like to be a dreamer."

Sandman is presently in the middle of "Season of Mists," an extended storyline scheduled to run until issue

"Issue #9 is the only one I couldn't get to done and now with two more it's the *Sandman* and the whole act of performing, all-singing, all-dancing version," notes Gaiman of the unique take on the dreams of stage.

"By definition, [Mist Movers] is probably the hardest act to follow," admits Gaiman of his *Black Orchid* sub-series.



ART: MICHAEL GOODMAN

#12. "It picks up on *Sandman* #10 and #11," explains Gaiman. "The final issue was the *Sandman* 10th issue. Essentially, what happens is in *Sandman* #11, it's pointed out in the *Sandman* author himself that his series of considering a 10-year-old to find for young years because the fact it wasn't a good thing to be for her was possibly not the smart thing to do. He says, 'Oh, I'll go and get her now.' It's 'Lullaby' The *Sandman*, *Sandman* #10 to 1



Gaiman's treatment of the story is working, compared to what he'd like to do with "The Stranger: The Missing Years."

help Neil Gaiman get any rest.

much bigger work, not entirely as anyone would expect, except this.

"This subplot is very strange and confusing, with a number of gods appearing. Karen goes, 'Goddess gods, goddess gods, we have Orpheus, we have Orpheus, we have Orpheus, we have Orpheus getting involved, and our entire level, we have the dead coming back to life. That's the story that *Sam Wagner* did, which was not in a copy-bashing school. After that, I'll probably be released and write them to do a bunch of short stories again."

Gaiman's other regular book is *Mitchellman*, which he took over with issue #107. Following in the footsteps of Alan Moore (#50-#71) is a project that would discourage most writers. For Gaiman, it was a challenge to deal with only the slightest limitation. "Alan is a very hard act to follow. By definition, he's probably the hardest act to follow. What made it impossible was that Alan asked me to do it back to

1988. The phone rang, and he said, 'Well, I'm going to be ditching *Mitchellman* at the end of Book Three. I'll probably finish it in six to eight months. Would you like to take it over?' My jaw dropped and I said, 'Yeah! I don't know if I can do it, but OK.'

"What was bizarre was that I had planned most of the stories in 'The Golden Age' back in 1986, and when I came to write them in 1990, I discovered I wasn't the same person anymore. I had to go into each of the stories I had plotted and find out what

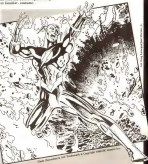
made it interesting for me now. For example, the return of *Kingpin* is actually a plot that I had four years ago. The last one it's now all about *Andy Warhol*, named by *Andy Warhol*, told down in it. I think now doing stories is something that I've done more to get back into the story."

In "The Golden Age," Gaiman will be taking a back seat for a few months as the book explores the idea of mankind living in a perfect society. "While some readers may not be ready for utopian stories, Gaiman promises that things will soon get much darker. "After 'The Golden Age,' we'll have a story called 'The Silver Age,' in which we see old *Mitchellman* characters come back from the dead. It will be focusing almost exclusively on *Mitchellman*, *Mitchellman* and *Winters*, as well as what it's like in this society of years on. Something that will be a story called 'The Silver Age,' which will begin about 100 years from now, with another *Mitchellman* character coming back from the dead."

Gaiman will also be bringing back some long-forgotten ideas and characters from the *Silver Age* of comics, which, for better or worse, have been



With some aid, the Scarlet Speedster gets a new, yet familiar, costume.



Flash, however, is still the same superhero who saves the world.

Fast Footnotes

When William Messner-Lobitz plans to keep Barry Allen's life moving in a heroic pace in upcoming issues of *The Flash*, "the character I am given when I look over his book is one that because the Flash seems so fast, it makes sense that his life is never static," the writer explains. "So, this is a character [Lobitz] brings storylines that wrap up in some way. Barry's life will be pushed in a new direction—he's going to end up with money again. While looking around for some way to describe his life again, I decided that he had just about gotten used to being lower middle-class, and now he's going to be rich again."

According to Messner-Lobitz, the Scarlet Speedster will have to solve his newfound riches by solving a new mystery in an old mansion, but not before he takes care of his income tax problem, which he inherited during his previous tenure as a millionaire.

"Flash's going to get out of the income tax situation in a very unique way," the writer explains. "It's been said he'll do a little 'business' work for the IRS. This gangster character looks like he's about to jump the country, and he has collected the regular batch of money from super-villains to protect him. The IRS and FBI are all closing in on him, but the IRS wants to believe that he

collected their money, so they send 'Flash' to fight. It kind of got him. It's basically one of the more action-oriented stories, with the Flash having to go through various kinds of hell to get his money back." Messner-Lobitz adds that Barry won't be "up to speed" in his financial situation until Feb.

The Kapital in Capitalism, the Russian super-villain formerly known as Rictus, finally, says, returning for a multi-part story that begins with issue #11. "We first meet a Russian super-villain called Proletariat, an old-line Russian who really has to wrap that self-destructing oil over Kryptonite type," Messner-Lobitz says. "This whole Russian storyline will occur sometime somewhere in the late '80s, where they all go back to Russia and make some sort of accommodation. After all, the world has changed considerably since the beginning of the new Flash's run, where [writer] Mike Baron originally introduced the Red and Blue Tintin. I thought it was time to recognize that."

Other storylines currently in the works include another team-up with

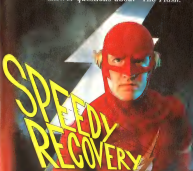
"It makes sense that his life is never static," says writer William Messner-Lobitz, who plans to keep Barry Allen's life at a fast pace—including a visit to the set of the Flash movie.

Superman to follow up on the Superman-Flash team fight earlier this year in adventures of Superman, and Barry's visit to the Flash movie. "He goes with the cast and some of the Flash TV series' money," says the writer, "and I thought it would be interesting to have 'Flash' visit the set of a Flash movie being made that details Barry Allen's life. We didn't want to do a TV series, because that would be a little too close."

As for the Flash TV series on CBS, William Messner-Lobitz is impressed with the show's direction, and its use of the Barry Allen character. "It's all up to DC who were involved with the show agreed that it had to be pretty much Barry Allen," he explains. "It's more Barry, than would be too much history involved in it only for what the Flash is. I just didn't want to go too far."

—DANIEL SIKORAK

Quick! John Wesley Shipp only has a second to answer questions about "The Flash."



John Wesley Shipp has a mind. It's not the typical racing for a hanky, more like tripping, running, walking, something like Professor Freeman. It's not a pretty picture of the actor who portrays The Flash. "Playing the Flash does tend to get a bit awkward," cracks Shipp in a very unconvincing way.

Wearing the Flash costume is like running two marathons. It doesn't breathe at all and, after working in it for about an hour, suddenly you'll move along, high out of the clouds, but about a gallon of water pours on. They try to dry me out between takes. But most of the time, I'm working around in a major costume. And when you shoot so much at night, make sure to come with the battery."

Flash, actor Shipp says to be

very comfortable with The Flash during a pressbook interview in his backstage trailer. In today's study, The Flash was recently given a commendation for a full season by CBS. Allen is ready to go, the show has improved (substantially) and, most importantly, Shipp has control over his super-hero role.

"Yeah, I've pretty much gotten knowledge," Shipp says. "I know the Flash. I'm feeling really in home in the role of Barry Allen. I can tell I'm at home because I'm beginning to take more chances with the characters. I'm doing more adding. I'm asking more questions about what motivates them. I feel, like I'm getting deeper into these characters. What has the covering in Flash says to me is the

Non-fatal cases proved to be much more frequent than fatal cases, and were more common in the elderly than in the young.

said if they had any Christmas, and they look down a lot of almost the whole row, all of them in really nice shape. I'm thinking that since there were about 100 crates in the box, there was going to be at least 1000. But when I looked the guy knew much, he says, I don't know, 100 bucks. So, I'm thinking to myself, "Oh, great." This is absolutely a con that it is big demand.

Despite becoming comfortable with the Clinch, Louis realized that the team would have to be introduced to a new generation of members in the eight-hour mind-union, while older fans became re-acquainted with the characters. "I said to Kirk [Clemente], 'Look, with the perception of some guys about here and there, no one has seen the Clubhouse since their book was cancelled in 1973. Where have these guys been since then?'"

¹Waters, J. C.; Hwang, S.-H. *Chemical Reviews* 1997, 97, 1375.

superstitions in the field, in the '80s said, "What exactly is the [fido] ceremony? Is anyone, you know, [the fido]...? Is anyone get killed? What needs that? Let's take that name, and let's merchandise the hell out of it! We'll have Challengee pajamas, Challengee lunch pads, a Challengee comic book, and make some money. There, we can do whatever we want to do." So, that's where these guys did it."

But the Managing Team believes about their discipline is essential. The Challenges underwent several major personal changes. For one thing, they've opted with time. "We thought perfectionism ideas to be particularly 20 or 25," Lark explains.

In our remarks, we also told the kids and if anyone knew what those guys' real names were. Weeping in tears with the fact that they're now grown men, we said, "What a mistake. How many 12-year-old guys named 'Pete' do you know?" So, from this point on, although it really doesn't take effect until the second issue, *Age*

St. Kyle's Maryam, Head is Mother Maryam, Priest is Father Maryam, and brother is Father Maryam.

Link has also introduced a new Challenger, a sharp reporter named Harold Miller. Through the Challenger comic book and Miller's articles in a patchwork magazine, the team's past exploits are chronicled, although in questionable detail.

"In order to make their adventures a bit more interesting to his readers, Shaffer polished them up a bit," Leah points out. "So, what we don't know is, 'Did the Challengers ever really fight a Vishnu-like or a Hindu-like, or were they simply characters created to make the team more exciting?' This is something that we deal with in the series: the reality of what we've versus their myth."

Ries, who joined the *Challengers* in the '60s, adds promises the character will play an important role in the story, although he refuses to comment further. "The only thing I can tell you

is that she and Fred have gotten very close," he claims.

Even Challenger Mountain, the team's home and headquarters, is no longer the same. According to Loeb, the Challe will live in the mountains, but it now also serves as a communication station.

[illegible]

"A mysterious figure enters the mountain with a packing bear group and places a bomb in the ventilation system. Right in the same time the Challenger's are discussing whether or not they should try to harness that alternative energy source. As they pull the switch, the mountain blows up, roughly 1,500 people are killed, and the bomb is destroyed."

While most to-come items would be in this situation or a simple return in return, it was quite the opposite offer on the challenges. "Was I OK?" asked all of this was that everyone I pitched the story to said, "OK. They're put together again, in fact and what really happened," but that's not what happens," says Lott. "What happens is that they go to trial in the second season, and they're eventually acquitted. By that time's need, development is expanding them not just as their characters and then not what they're accused of, but what they're doing. They all have to do much other things. So, maybe, but I'm saying, I'm not enough. They're really go off in a second direction."

"As a training session, it's to shed with in Challenger is 'What is this morning man? Why are we supposed to be here now?' Are there still not men who get a second chance in life, which is really what I've learned and it is all about," says, However, the game made which made him Challenger in the first place enough from a time in their lives when they had everything. They were the best—top-tier soccer players. (Bobby), the first goal. (Dad), the best water-skiing experience. (Paul) and the best mountain climbing. (Dad)—and they were hurt. Their place changed, and they woke up and said, "We should do something," we can leave. When we walk there.

again, the same thing has happened. They're sick. They live in the mountains. They're doing nothing with their lives. When the mountains blow up, they have to decide what it is they're going to do.¹¹



Simply stated, the Challenger will not gain traction through the mainstreaming, marketing to an automatic vote base.

Cathogens like will not only have to adjust to their homes' status and personalities in the New Frontier era—yes, but also their fate. "One of the things I didn't read in this book were how people who looked like Bruce Wayne with different color hair," says *Empire*. "I read the issues of the book, and I sometimes couldn't tell them apart. If the reader made a mistake, you were in real trouble."

"You did the original sketches," the writer adds, "and they had to be approved by MGM, because we were potentially changing the look of the original characters. We decided that the reason they all looked like what were essentially Jack Kirby's designs was

with the implementation of the challenge. Students report the program's impact on their learning.



The Challengers had been given a second chance at life, but in the meantime, they lost a purpose and now have a heavy debt to repay.

that was what they looked like in the Challengers comic book, at that's what everyone knows them as. But when you meet them in real life, they look completely different."

John, whose previous credits include *Ultimate Marvel*, several issues of *Comix*, *The American* and the upcoming *Wildly* title *Black*. These Comics' general look on Challengers after being approached by then editor Barbara Kent. "Barbara suggested me to help, what had been my work in *Comix*." What? The artist recalls. "The tone of us got together, and it has been great working on the project."

"The guy I worked with had been very different from the way I worked with most artists," John adds. "He likes to play around with layout a little more than I do. When it's all up to me, my attitude towards layout is that it's straightforward. Not necessarily a grid. But I don't bend the page as do any fancy rules very often."

John also points out that he was never really a fan of costume superheroes, says that drawing superheroes was what intrigued him more about Challengers of the Unknown. "Despite the fact that it's a

superhero book," he says, "these guys don't have super powers. And, when the line of them goes up, they go on in very different varieties and colors, which gives me a chance to 'type' a number of different looking and drawing styles." John also mentions: "Your last artist David [unintelligible], his [unintelligible] and Jack Kirby at most of his artistic influence on the series."

As for whether or not looking Challengers fans will like this new version, the artist jokes, "I don't know any longtime Challengers fans. But usually, I don't know. If they're really fans of the old stuff, well, then it's like the old stuff. But I think it's very interesting, and what we have done to play with the conventions inside the original is sometimes funny, loyal to me as an original Challengers readers," laughs John. "I'm really hoping people will sample the book. I'm glad to have had an opportunity to take four guys who were in some amazing situations, some, bring them into the Web, and give them the place that they really deserve. These guys are Jack Kirby's forgotten heroes, and I think they deserve to be known now, and known in a different way."

and reader around with them.

"In a way, I feel a debt to Jack Kirby," John admits, "not so far as his artistic influence as me for Challengers, but because of what he has done in the industry. It's very important to acknowledge people who have created something. The way the comic industry was run in the past—think God is changing a little more than you created it and it was there out of your hands. I think the industry should be acknowledged every step along the line. When somebody comes along, if they haven't created something out of whole cloth, then they might be say something about the people who helped get them to what they're doing. So, I like to take my chance I have to thank Kirby."

"This and I have taken from the very beginning about having to be loyal to me as an original Challengers readers," laughs John. "I'm really hoping people will sample the book. I'm glad to have had an opportunity to take four guys who were in some amazing situations, some, bring them into the Web, and give them the place that they really deserve. These guys are Jack Kirby's forgotten heroes, and I think they deserve to be known now, and known in a different way."

By DANIEL BICKMOLTZ

He's dying really shouldn't have meant as a surprise to anyone, though. A day after all, the boy was going to die at the height of World War II, when Nazi Germany killed the very waters his ship he was almost was approaching, the old man was in the front. "I don't know, explanation, country of the enemy, how the world apart, but even he couldn't avoid the German machine gun bullets when he came looking to the surface, grasping for air."

Still, there he sat in the darkness couldn't understand what he was doing there according to their records, he wasn't due for several decades. And so, after some deliberation, it was decided that he should return to Earth and fight whatever struggle he found there, aided by his quantum angel, Mr. Kruger, and very historical or fictional figure who would come whenever he spoke the word "eternity." A few years later, however, Kid Eternity all but completely vanished, apparently having finally gone to his rest.

An Eternity in Hell

Kid Eternity has been away for so long, he's almost forgotten. And he's not happy about it.

"It turns out Kid Eternity had been imprisoned in Hell at the end of all his adventures when he was young, and that's why we haven't seen any of him for the past 40 years," reveals artist Roberto Fregoso, who with artist Morten is recreating the character for a short-run DC Vertigo format mini-series. "But he just managed to break out in the middle of somebody's party, and he has to go back to Hell to get his old comrade Mr. Kruger with this alternative sometimes who actually dies in the first issue."

"The trouble with the plot for Kid Eternity," the artist confesses, "is the fact that David goes back to Hell and forwards in time all the time. The whole first issue takes place over about 10 minutes, and within that, there are many backdrops to different characters which are also represented in different colors. And it actually makes it very difficult to describe on the whole. I still have to refer to the synopsis more than just to make sure I'm not doing something out of context with the work. I don't want to say anything else about it really. At because I would probably get it even more mixed up, and I'll because I think it's a very good story, and it would spend it too much."



For Fegredo, it was more the opportunity to work with Morrison and the fact that "it was the first thing I had been offered by DC" than his fondness for the genre. Morrison's previous series that led to Fegredo's illustrating *Kid Flash*?

"I didn't actually have anything about it in the closet," recalls the artist, who himself is somewhat better known in his native England for his art. But there, consequently, "I got sent a whole bunch of photographs and things like that. They're fun to examine. They're good Indian stuff, aren't they? They're sort of like Republic Saturday morning stuff. I quite liked having a double over Boris, but it's not the sort of thing that I would like to see down. I certainly wouldn't have drawn it as well as Sheldon [Middell] anyway."

This show, he stresses, "isn't anything like the original series," but while the characters take a dramatic, totally different approach to characters most readers won't like to recognize anyway, Fegredo has chosen to make two alterations.

"On the Raynes, as far as I've done him so far, I'm not going to change anything. He's just going to be the same as he was, like the old, cheerful looking chap, and that's it. It's the Kid himself, he's older, he's not 40 years older. I've drawn him more like about 16. He's taller. He's wearing pretty much the same sort of thing. The commentary is still there, and he's still wearing the Oxford bag trousers and a white button-down sweater. The background's different. The whole show as it is represented as being far more liberal, which is obviously much easier to do since it's in full color [instead of as opposed to black and white]. He's wearing glasses now, so there's a little trouble trying not to make him look too much like Mr. T with a wig on, but luckily not. Grant had actually drawn a sketch of the Kid, which I thought looked fine."

"Boy is seemed silly to change [the design] that much, really," remarks the artist. "Otherwise, it would have had very little in common with what it once was. Maybe Grant would have preferred that. I think he's probably not old...I don't know if the Kid is one of Grant's favorite characters. It probably says a lot about Grant if he was. Boy there was no reason to. I think the Kid has changed more in character."

"Kid liberality is not as much the happy-go-lucky, old-fashioned little chap that he was at the time when he

"He's definitely more heroic and supernatural" than superhuman action, says movie director. "Luckily, I haven't had to draw Kid liberally being around helping with movies."

was top-dressed in the original series. The Kid has become an agent of the Lords of Chaos. His job is to create chaos in our own sphere. I won't say why. If you think about it, this is a person who has been imprisoned in jail for the last 40 years, so his outlook on life is going to have changed considerably, which is reflected in his attitude towards the rest of the characters, particularly the dead ones. He's more realistic. I think Grant wanted to appeal to older people. There's more for the post-generation, a little more realistic, so, that's pretty well reflected in the character."

Within the last few years, the *Deadmen* visited the underworld to witness what befallen to him. Raynes tried to take control of that infernal realm, and both Swamp Thing and Superman have assumed the place to rescue their friends' souls, but Fegredo comments that the last of DC liberality must have his way back into "it and the most sort of hell usually depicted in the DC Universe. It probably has more in common with Alan Moore's hell, but only more so. It doesn't rely just on that. I think Grant sometimes described this as a people hell in the sense that he said the people have taken over the River Styx and it's a clean area. So, hell's a surprising, almost poetic term."

But long before he and Morrison merged Kid liberality in that world of brilliance and pain, Fegredo, while still an art student at Leeds Polytechnic, took his own tale there as part of an assignment for *Illustrate* (John Allman's topiary from *Illustrate*).

"It was given to me for a paper," Fegredo explains. "I don't know if he knew what else to do with me at the time. It was the sort of thing he gave to people who he liked to call 'problem students.' But it was interesting because it changed the way I work completely. I spent about a year doing huge black and white artwork, pen and ink and just about everything else, with white paint splattered all over. It so it could be superimposed on ink, but then artwork, that's it. It was a lot of experimentation with texture and stuff, and I think it was that that he wanted me to make more than anything else. It was up to me how I interpreted it and I came up with something quite weird."

"I was trying to do the thing huge, sweeping visions of hell and God known what. Infernal angels and everything, which was sort of there in Kid liberality, so that was quite important. And I was trying to represent the whole of this entire picture with without using text. As just a picture whole, I was trying to make the images into hell so that they could virtually be



Illustration demands that the world of Chaos, Kid liberality, perhaps, after Fegredo will be the first person to see





"And University leaders under" also are taking a few questions to heart, notes *Chronicle*. For example, "It's a slightly negative reaction. It might have required a little work to be the faculty putting a wrong light on things and

posed in their own right, say I mean challenge
 something because it's a person.

[illegible]

"That adaptation of *Shogun* four probably isn't their best writing, either. Joe Grant wrote certain segments of the script for me. But Ed Emery, as it stands, was pretty well wrecked and he fell I came along. There have been a few weeks along the way for me specifically, but for the most part, he had done his script, he had had his comeback about what I've done, I've said, 'Oh, at newspapers, and that has been pretty much it. No, although it's not often. I'm a complete kind of off-

Nevertheless, since there are doubtless many readers who, like Figgis himself, wouldn't let Kid Bruce sit among the best remembered of characters, one has to wonder why Figgis would want to stick his own name in.

"I would say it was because they go, 'God! There's a book that was written by Louis Brandeis! Didn't he do that amazingly wonderful *Ambler v. Vanne*?' And what's their attitude when I'm asked to write, 'well, it doesn't matter if it was written by Louis Brandeis! And that's probably a very good reason why, because it is a good reason. I'll stand by that, even if I get laughed at in the court.'"

For the possibility of a successful
either leading to a continuing A's
literally holds its own particles

"Stupid and," says Desmond Fitzgerald, of the suggestion that he could've been used to translate in the Lincoln Center into an ongoing one. "Someone that they would be willing to use a regular paid actor, with the use of a regular director. I don't think it would be very feasible unless it was a rather regular film. I don't think Desmond would be interested in writing it anyway, and I wouldn't do it unless I was writing it. It would mean rather pointless, it's finished or not finished. I don't know, maybe they will bring it back, I hope so. But I think it's a very good idea. And I think I have been dead and buried and in the few last few years, and it's come down to me, that's where he should probably stay."

The music of Bitty Curve and Plastic Parties is aimed to take middle readers on an epic journey to a place they've never been before.

Meltingpot, however, is a silly—and a little uneven—film's difference from what readers usually find in standard superhero series.

"It takes place in a city, a metropolitan setting. The one dominant area in this book will always be the city," explains Ted McGowan. "It's the one recurring character that will dominate each issue. It's like a backdrop, putting, on the surface, on which everything is based. Everything that happens within that city occurs in the city."

Whitaker is quick to admit that Microsoft doesn't fit into either the SP house or superhouse genre. "There's maybe a corner of all of those in it, but nothing specific. I can't label it as a house look, but it does have common and other elements. I wouldn't consider it a superhouse brand, but there are people who have larger-than-life brand qualities, even though they don't fit around in cases."

Longjumeau in Strasbourg. Pils-
tand is to Mr. Kane more convenient
than accurate descriptions, says
Mr. Kane: "It's like The Chord in that
Pils is large-scale, suggesting they will
destroy Christian Churches. Some will
suffer and some will be killed, but
there are no allies or sympathizers. The
story structure is similar, but the
specifics are different. And it is more
of a psychological mystery that re-
veals around the character, though it
takes place in a large city in a 19th
century, as these historical

"It's like nothing else, but it does have elements of both," he says, explaining that the trip takes place in its own world and in its own reality.

The fate of the w

CORNER

changes made, according to the writer/writer. "There's a dramatic change coming. The first shows turned up like characters and got everyone comfortable with who's in the books. Then, the majority of them die by the end of it," he laughs. "They're brought back through a metamorphosis and reader love [over] their life spans."

"The people in the city really don't know anything outside, so the city is essentially a whole world. In the city is nothing," he remarks, and the end of the story is as disconcerting as the end of the world is the inhabitants. "There's nothing outside of the city that they



The fate of the world can be decided on any street corner in Ted McKeever's city.

Dr. JIM HANLEY, DIRECTOR

shed to—97% of all commitments, he. It's handled by an apocalyptic ending within the city, and they choose sides. Good is led by an army of 'angels'; if you will, and Evil is headed by an army of demons. From back here on, there is the choosing of sides and the events that lead up to the apocalypse. It becomes like the Civil War, in that there is no right and wrong within

"Think there has the first measurement of an 'angel' against a 'demon,' and it has a decisive effect. They just start to multiply."

Maxwell laughs unconcerned at the idea that his team might be "conspired in some way to perform here." "People are always saying, 'The those of you who like *Maximum Fun* or *Avengers*, you'll like this one.' Well, I don't know about that," he laughs. "I think they just trying to tap into the audience that *Avengers* brought. This is a pure Maxwell group, the *Wetlands*, but I don't want just them, I want the *Fun*."

"The people in the city really don't know anything about us, so the city is essentially a white void," explains another kind of failure of his urban development.



Her three colleagues already picked up. Strategist will think they know what's coming, but they're in for a surprise.

book, so he looks entertaining and a little upsetting. A person who reads *X-Men* might like the singing better, but even though there's good and bad, I don't want to be the one to choose the sides, as opposed to saying, "This guy's a demon, so you should hate him." I want to be on the sidelines, and let the *X-Men* readers say, "I like the bad guy or" or let the *Avs* readers say, "Well, I like the good ones."

"I would like the students to be initially confused, I guess," he chuckles. "Just to keep them on the edge of all points would be fine. But I have all intentions of explaining things and making them clear. There's a big difference."

Although McKeever is known for his work on *Edly*, *Convent*, *Transit* and *Plastic* *Flora*, he isn't making many concessions for the mainstream reader with *Metropolis*.

"Many characters from *Edgy Current* will be in this book, and some of the characters from *Threads* are going to be coming back, so in essence, it's still very much like the others. It's mine, and I have the characters in my head all the time. So I can see it's been there this way."



Answer: B B requires the assumption that operations on the left had more effect than

deck with bamboo on a larger scale. Fifty-five Funks had that bamboo atmosphere, but it was basically bamboo one or two people. This deck more closely with good and evil, so if that appeals to the average consumer, then that's how I really just

event, people in need and be entertained by it, but I didn't want to put Debra Martin on the Silver Screen in it. I was offered the opportunity to use other comic company to do the story but to include their characters. I just said, 'I don't think so.'"

Whitman? is larger than he had thought. "In the past, I would say, I began with much Babb, and I know who made Phoebe Foster. Then, I would go to conventions, and both 18-year-old kids and 40-year-old guys would come up and say, 'I love this book.' There is no age, but the majority of our readers seem to like the st-

The April 1 file came about because of McKenna's desire to get hands in the City of Los Angeles Police, which was not in the district. "My real desire was to do a book in an urban setting."



5 **ANNE** know I wanted to get back into it. I've never really liked psychology, but we were interested in biblical stories, not from the religious aspect as much as these really neat stories about the battles between good and evil. I said to myself, 'If there's ever a more appropriate time for a bible, it's now.' I modified everything to our city, which basically makes everyone in Chicago between right and wrong.

"There are very old elements, like the plaque which runs rampant through the city. By about 1800, the city will become confused off to where entry and exit is virtually impossible. People say you can't work in a vacuum, but this is what we'll have—what happens to a city that becomes a completely vacuum within itself."

McKinnon says his characters are based on reality, and he is inspired by Steve Lerner's original *Spider-Man*, who was clumsy and not particularly muscular. "The people in my book aren't specific people that

know, but they're derived from people I know personally—a shabby guy I'll see on the street on a grid with big legs and a smaller chest. These are the ones that will end up in the book."

There are stark differences between *Midnight* and most other romances, he points out. "Because the book's title is not a character's name, there is no guarantee that any character will return. When a character's name is in the title, even if they disappear for a few hours, you know damn well they're

"Normally, when I was reading comic books as a kid, I always got the feeling that the villains were about to take over the world, but he's stopped just in time. Well, by *Ultimate #4*, we are in there to stop this thing, and basically, the bad guy wins! It's not that I've always been rooting for the bad guy, but I always thought, 'What if the bad guys did win?'

2	5	8	1
4	2	5	4
6	3	8	3
<p>"Because the flower's ribbon was in the flower's name, it was no guarantee that any character will return," admits the flower.</p>			
7	6	8	0
1	7	9	9
2	8	0	7
3	9	1	6



"I would like the students to be fully confident," says the teacher. "I would like to know."

"Thirdly, whenever anyone is supposed to become a hero in combat, they're either portrayed as perfect or in the case of most vigilante characters, total Chatterbox can be more complex than that. Now, their physical structures are different. I have this character go, this model, this guy, this money guy—they're as broad as they get. Usually, people come to assume heroes with supermen, what the guy does, the street can be just as heroic. I wanted to break that mold."

"I see the books describing a mainstream medicine, but I don't see myself or my books as mainstream by any means," he says, admitting there are a couple of mainstream characters but like to work on the border.

When every I dream, in some
of them in the Republic of
the United States of America.



Harvested from 1000 trees under 100
 1000 trees under 1000 trees
 1000 trees under 1000 trees
 1000 trees under 1000 trees

0000

[illegible][illegible]

mean, The Polish is actually beginning to do extremely well, although the fact that it is supposedly bad is often stressed. There will probably be a great deal of work done in the next few years, and much will probably be done in the next few years, and much will probably be done in the next few years.



I CAN'T DIE YET
I HAVEN'T SEEN THE
JOLSON STONE



"I think the comic would have to be extremely brutal," admits Martin. "There are comic readers, most readers in the comic field, that are aware of it."



fact, there's always some interest in how the able, established characters will react to the new character."

While new people are added to the *WILD CARD* universe, the writers also are willing to kill off characters, even major ones. "It's a dangerous world in *WILD CARD*. Each writer, of course, has the right to kill his or her own creation without necessarily plotting it out. When we have the death of a character at the hands of a different writer than the creator, which is most cases, there must be negotiation and planned ahead of time. But violent characters

can end up like out in their stories are completed, but the world goes on."

In developing the "buds" back photo, Martin says that ideas come from both himself and the entire group of writers and then are discussed.

"We get together as regularly as we can," he states. "There is constant back-and-forth communication. Generally speaking, anyone may provide a snippet of what a tale at first will be about. If I like it, I'll take it and expand on it to cover my whole own kind of framework. Then, all the writers expand on that, so it's a constant

The action is fast between which most *WILD CARD* should take TV or film.

process of growth and dissemination. The writers, by and large, like each other and enjoy this sort of collaboration process."

Each writer has the right to control his own characters. If he doesn't like what's happening to his people, he can veto it and then we don't do it. Our rules are a little stricter than some of the other shared worlds in that regard."

As for the topic comic book mini-series of *WILD CARD*'s last DC comic, *WITCHAMAZILL* All Martin has to do is sit and acknowledge the work of Lewis Shuman in getting a comic comic master bookshelves.

"I just got the second issue and I've been happy with what I've seen so far," he comments. "I'm not as directly concerned with it as I am with the anthology. Lew helped sell it and reworked it and he has written or edited most of it, working with the other writers who've contributed and I believe everyone is trying to get the same reader feel in this comic."

In fact, the *Witchamazzill* reader would like to see the comic series continue. "If there is a second series, it will be an entirely original story set in the *WILD CARD* world," he says. "The general reader is partially an original story—the longer story—but since the characters are now in comic readers, there are feedbacks to establish who these people are and how they come into being."

At the same time, Martin doesn't think *WILD CARD* has had much of an influence on comic books.

"I wish I could say otherwise," he remarks. "That's simply because I think that comic book today is extremely brutal. Many writers and artists on comic don't read books and don't know of what's going on in the science fiction world or any other world. They're just very much wrapped up in comics."

When a new grand-breaking comic comes out like *Witchamazzill*, which in some ways is similar to *WILD CARD*, it has a tremendous effect on the comic field because everyone is aware of it. All have said our comic started coming out, most of the creators in the comic field had to know aware of us."

Still, having the anthology series become a comic book series is gratifying to George K.R. Martin, whose creativity is always being stimulated by it. "We all got involved in this project because we love comic books and we have comic heroes and always had a standing ambition to write for them—had movies to do it, a little better and I'll take it in a little more sophisticated and adult manner than what you see in the run-of-the-mill contemporary comic."

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Takes trouble. "Goku should come back down. Akira fights and ends such a miserable show."

Even though Japan hasn't been involved in a war in all of this time, the mass media, television, newspapers are filled with daily reports, not so concerned by it, and I'm just not of that whole experience," says Otsuka through an American translator.

Where Akira could do bad in England or the U.S., it was a hot ticket on the video-market in Japan. In conventions, even though it was in Japanese, its post-apocalyptic themes and violence, couched with superb animation and lavishly (expensive) backgrounds, made it a treat for adult eyes. It is also true to the back of the English comic, that most animation for these movies, like a child graphic novel come to life.

Unfortunately, there's still the perception in the U.S. that animation is for the kiddies, which is why Spielberg and Lucas didn't know quite what it is all about. The two of them have their own animated projects. Ghibli, which they haven't been able to push through Hollywood for several years.

On the issue of Akira being banned, not for the movie in itself, "I am surprised by the response here in America," says Otsuka, "especially because I made it for the Japanese audience, not for the world audience. It was quite a surprise to me how it has been received."

Although he has gone on record saying that he never intended Akira for animation, he admits now that the idea for the film came to him. "I don't know how it came through the comic production. I hired many friends who are animators in Japan, and they have been pushing me to make this film to animate this, but the production

"to make a great deal of time to adjust a story that had been running for six years into a new theme from Japan," explains Otsuka.

was that there would be enough money in the production budget to do it seriously. And one of the big points was to make the lip movements in the actual words."

In America, this is done not only. The dialogue is recorded first, the lip movements then drawn on again to the



Both George Lucas and Steven Spielberg, who loved the film, he said Akira, feeling even they couldn't sell it to an audience that kids animation is for kiddies.



mouth. But Akira marked the first time Japan disagreed with Hollywood," and in the American way, recorded the soundtrack first. It took the actors some getting used to, not of course the effort to put on American then because of the English dubbing, but it was a great step forward in Japan motion.

I New York City he wrote, that New Tokyo. Otsuka wanted to make his home where he's writing, in the city of the upscale financial district, which is decorated in a neo-Japanese style with white canvas bridges over the Hudson and a space, black and white lines. Otsuka says this, which is explained for him not by the Japanese style, but by his own release, which is larger and more open to place than. Editor Murphy's release of timeliness and importance. It seems a group is now moving to improve his publication, one of the movie's late producers, a representative of Young Production, a liaison with Marvel, an American in-



The animated anthology Robert Crumb will be highlighted by a training session by Otsuka.



A character in the anime Akira stands next to the large, mechanical structure in the city, and the machine begins.



probably best to look at the result as a digest of the entire story. I'm also curious about why I made the film so long, but it was essential to make the film the entire story. It took approximately 120,000 sets or drawings to complete Akira, work which was turned out to make for animation studio in Japan. "Even to Japan, it is really unusual. It was the first time I've ever seen it," says Otsuka. "Otsuka remains a unique field. The entire time I was writing the comic, though, I was thinking, how can I make this into something that moves? So, when I came to make the film, it was an easy transition for me."

Most comics in Japan are in black and white, but Otsuka would be very different pages each issue, so he had a certain amount of money in mind. All of his internal scenes are in color. However, "When Marvel first decided to do the project, they sent samples from

The hardest thing in making Akira, which runs 24 minutes, was deciding what to leave out. "I took a great deal of time to adjust a story that had been running for six years into a two-hour film film," says Otsuka. "It's

